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As in many processes in nature, timing is important. The female reproductive part of a flower is receptive to pollen only at certain times of the year. Creatures like bees and birds, which move from flower to flower in search of food, are a fast and efficient way for plants to distribute their pollen.

Both the male and the female reproductive parts of a plant are in the center of the flower. The male, pollen-producing part is called the *anther*, held aloft by a stalk called the *filament*. The entire male apparatus is called a *stamen*. Each pollen grain is a different species. The female reproductive part of a plant, the stigma, sits on top of the style, which leads to an *ovary* at the base. The entire female plant mechanism is called the *carpel*.

How does the process of plant pollination by animals work? A *pollinator* (like a bird, bat, or butterfly) in search of food visits a plant. The plant has secreted a concentrated food source, from special glands and tucked it away in its blossom. As the pollinator is crawling around the blossom looking for nectar, the pollinator rubs against the anther, which becomes attached to different parts of the pollinator's body. When the pollinator visits another blossom, it transfers the pollen grains from its body onto a stamen's placed stigma. After it reaches the stigma, the pollen grain grows a tiny pollen tube down the style and into an egg-filled ovary. Eventually, the pollen and the egg fuse to form a zygote.

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